

Message Text

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17

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00

SS-20 L-03 IO-14 AID-20 PC-10 USIA-15 AGR-20 DRC-01

(ISO)W

----- 010218

R 131407Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1880

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, OGEN, XA, LI

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH REGIONAL FAA OFFICE IN MONROVIA

REF: MONROVIA A-24 OF MARCH 21, 1974

BRUSSELS AND LAGOS FOR FAA; CASABLANCA FOR RCAA

SUMMARY: I HAVE BEEN ASKED BY FAA FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL RELOCATE REGIONAL REP FROM LAGOS TO MONROVIA. I SEE ADVANTAGES AND DESIRABILITY MONROVIA AS BASE FOR FAA REP. HOWEVER, ALREADY LARGE NUMBER USG AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL IN SMALL TOWN OF MONROVIA CAUSES CONCERN. NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS AS YET, BUT DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION MAJORITY OF LIBERIANS COULD CAUSE FRICTION FOR EXPATRIATES. COST ALSO A FACTOR. SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN RELOCATION CONTINENTAL U.S.

1. I HAVE RECEIVED LETTER FROM ALBERT L. GAMMON, FAA ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR EUROPE, AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST ATTACHED TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS, PROPOSING THAT OFFICE OF FAA
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REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA BE MOVED FROM AMEMBASSY LAGOS TO

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA. REASON GIVEN FOR MOVING AWAY FROM LAGOS IS THAT IT NOT MOST DESIRABLE LOCATION IN TERMS PRESENT AND FUTURE CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENT. CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO NAIROBI AND MONROVIA BUT LATTER DEEMED MORE DESIRABLE FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

(A) ALL PAA FLIGHTS IN AND OUT OF AFRICA TRANSIT ROBERTS-FIELD, PERMITTING FAA REP READY ACCESS ALL OF AFRICA AND BACK TO FAA REGIONAL HQ IN BRUSSELS,

(B) RELOCATION MONROVIA WOULD PERMIT EASIER AND CLOSER COORDINATION WITH RCAA CASABLANCA,

(C) HQ OF ICAO AND ASECNA, WITH WHICH FAA HAS CONTINUOUS DEALINGS, LOCATED DAKAR WHICH SERVICED THREE TIMES WEEKLY FROM MONROVIA,

(D) FAA HAS NEED PAY CLOSER ATTENTION TO IMPROVEMENT PAA REGIONAL AERONAUTICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND DISPATCH CENTER LOCATED ROBERTSFIELD, AND

(E) PROXIMITY MONROVIA TO MAURITANIA WOULD PERMIT FAA HANDLE WORKLOAD GENERATED BY HUGHES AIRWEST COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH GOM TO PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN AIRCRAFT. (NOTE: THOUGH NOT MENTIONED, HUGHES AIRWEST HAS THREE-YEAR MANAGEMENT CONTRACT WITH AIR LIBERIA.)

2. I ASKED BY MR. GAMMON FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL RELOCATE MONROVIA WITH TENTATIVE TRANSFER DATE SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 1974. STAFF WOULD BE ONE OFFICER AND ONE SECRETARY. OFFICE SPACE AND SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT WOULD BE REQUIRED.

3. WHILE I APPRECIATE ADVANTAGES RELOCATION TO MONROVIA WOULD OFFER FAA, I AM INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER PROLIFERATION USG AGENCIES AND HIGH LEVEL OUR EXPOSURE HERE. THIS CONCERNS SHARED BY INSPECTION TEAM RECENTLY IN MONROVIA. CURRENTLY, THERE OVER 550 USG EMPLOYEES AND PCV'S PLUS DEPENDENTS IN LIBERIA REPRESENTING STATE, AID, PC, DIA, USIS, FAS, DOD, DTS, VOA, NAVY OICC AND USAID PASA AGENCIES. AS NOTED IN ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT (REFAIR), OUR LARGE PRESENCE HAS NOT YET CREATED SERIOUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, MONROVIA IS SMALL TOWN AND, AS LOCAL ECONOMIC SITUATION DETERIORATES FOR MAJORITY OF LIBERIANS, SENSITIVITY TO PRESENT RELATIVELY WELL-TO-DO EXPATRIATES MAY CAUSE FRICTION. ADMITTEDLY, TWO MORE AMONG THOUSANDS ALREADY HERE WOULD NOT TIP SCALES, BUT IF TROUBLE SHOULD COME, IT WOULD FIND USE WITH YET ANOTHER USG AGENCY IN AN ALREADY BULGING BASKET.

4. IT ALSO SEEMS TO US THAT, SINCE MAIN ADVANTAGE TO FAA OF RELOCATION MONROVIA IS ACCESS TO AIR TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS TO REST OF AFRICA, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE RELOCATE AT OTHER END OF LINE IN NEW YORK. MONROVIA IS HIGH COST POST WITH 25 PERCENT DIFFERENTIAL ALLOWANCE, COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE, EXORBITANT HOUSING COSTS, UTILITY FEES, ETC. NO OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE IN CHANCERY SO THIS, TOO, WOULD HAVE TO BE RENTED. TOTAL COST MAINTAINING TWO-PERSON OFFICE (APPROXIMATELY \$80,000 PER ANNUM PLUS SALARIES) WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MORE THAN COVER COSTS TRANSPORTATION SEVERAL TIMES ANNUALLY NEW YORK TO MONROVIA AND RETURN. OTHER AFRICAN TRAVEL COSTS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED. IN THIS REGARD, WE NOTE THAT FAA REP LAGOS HAS VISITED MONROVIA ONLY TWICE IN PAST FIFTEEN MONTHS. INDEED, VISITS FAA REPS FROM NEW YORK APPEAR BE AT LEAST AS FREQUENT.

5. UNLESS DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES OBJECTION, OR THERE MORE PRESSING REASONS FOR LOCATION FAA REP HERE, I PROPOSE DENY APPROVAL.
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